

Message Text

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10/20

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 IO-10 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01 BIB-01 NIC-01 DPW-01

SR-02 ORM-01 EB-07 TRSE-00 IGA-01 XMB-04 AID-05 /098 W

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R 080420Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3395

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

CINCPAC

USDELJEC PARIS

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 2561

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDITIONAL TEXT)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: TWO INTERVIEWS BY PRESIDENT THIEU

DEPT PASS IMMEDIATE IBS/NCA

REF: SAIGON 2532

1. FOLLOWING IS OFFICIAL ACCOUNT PROVIDED EMBASSY BY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TWO SEPARATE INTERVIEWS WITH PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU, ONE BY NBC AND ONE BY CBS, ON MARCH 6. TEXT HAS BEEN SENT BY MFA TO ALL GVN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS.

BEGIN TEXT

2. EFFECTS ON SVN OF CAMBODIA'S EVENTUAL FALL.

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IF AFFECTS SVN BECAUSE THE COMMUNISTS WILL CONTINUE THEIR

AGGRESSION USING BOTH LAOS AND CAMBODIA AS LOGISTICS BASES. THEY WILL INFILTRATE MORE TROOPS IN SVN AND BE THREAT TO NEIGHBORING THAILAND AND MALAYA TOO. THERE WILL BE A REAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT FIRST, BECAUSE OF THAT THREAT THESE COUNTRIES LIKE SVN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUT ON DEFENSE; SECOND, EVERYONE WILL LOSE CONFIDENCE IN USAS BECAUSE USA PLEDGED TO HELP AND YET ABANDONED THEIR ALLIES. ASKED IF SVN PLANS TO INTERVENE IN CAMBODIA PRESIDENT THIEU SAID NO BECAUSE SVN DOES NOT HVE ENOUGH MILITARY AID FOR HERSELF, BECAUSE HE WILL NOT INTERFERE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY'S INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS. AS FOR SENDING IN THE TROOPS THE PRESIDENT SAID SVN CANNOT DO SOMETHING THAT THE USA WITH GREATER MEANS DO NOT WANT TO DO.

3. PRESIDENT LONNOL'S STATEMENT ABOUT RESIGNATION. WHAT DOES PRESIDENT THIEU THINK AND WOULD HE DO THE SAME THING IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES? PRESIDENT THIEU SAID LONNOL IS A PATRIOT AND A SOLDIER SO HE WILL DO ANYTHING TO SERVE CAMBODIAN INTEREST. THE PRESIDENT RECALLED HE SAID SAME THING LONG AGO-- FIVE YEARS AGO-- THAT WHEN PEACE COMES TO VIETNAM WHEN THRERE IS NO MORE AGGRESSION HE IS READY TO STEP DOWN BECAUSE HE IS A SOLDIER WHO SEEKS TO FIGHT FOR HIS COUNTRY AND NOT A POLITICIAN, WHEN WAR IS OVER HE HAS NO MORE MOTIVATION TO STAY BECAUSE THEN HIS RESPONSIBILITY IS OVER BUT AS LONG AS THE WAR GOES ON HE WILL NOT SURRENDER NOR DESERT. ASKED IF HE WOULD ALLOW LONNOL TO SET UP A GOVERNMENT IN EXILE IN SVN PRESIDENT THIEU REPLIED THE CASE HAS NOT ARISEN YET BUT THAT HE ALONE MAY NOT DECIDE AND THAT THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION.

4. OBSTACLE TO PEACE. RECALLED THAT THE COMMUNISTS CHARGE PRESIDENT IS OBSTACLE TO PEACE. PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE SIGNED THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND THEREFORE CANNOT BE CONSIDERED AS AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE BUT IT IS MORE ACCURATE TO SAY THAT HE IS AN OBSTACLE TO PREVENT NVN FROM TAKING OVER SVN. ASKED IF HE WOULD ACCEPT TO TALK DIRECTLY TO THE NVN LEADERS THE PRESIDENT SAID SVN DIPLOMACY IS TO TALK TO ANYONE PROVIDED INTERLOCUTORS RESPECT SVN SOVEREIGNTY.

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5. US SUPPLEMENTAL AID. PRESIDENT THIEU REPEATED STATEMENTS OF MARCH FIFTH REFTEL STRESSING THAT THE MATTER GOES BEYOND THE ACTUAL AID. PRESSED TO SAY HOW MUCH OVER THE YEARS WILL SVN NEED THE PRESIDENT ANSWERED THAT IT DEPENDS ON THE ABILITY OF NVN TO CONTINUE THEIR AGGRESSION, THAT IS ON THE KIND OF AID RUSSIA AND RED CHINA ARE WILLING TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THEIR ALLIES. PRESIDENT

THIEU SAID WITHOUT ESCALATION OF WAR SVN CAN INCREASE ITS FOOD PRODUCTION SUBSTANTIALLY WITHIN THREE YEARS AND WITH PROMISING PROSPECTS OF OIL SVN CAN LOOK TO SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED AMERICAN AID. PRESIDENT THIEU SAID BOTH RUSSIA AND RED CHINA FIGHT TO KEEP THEIR PRESTIGE IN NORTH VIETNAM AND ARE COMPETING TO HELP NVN. WHEN SAID THAT THE DOLLAR VALUE OF COMMUNIST AID TO NVN IS REDUCED PRESIDENT THIEU SAID WHAT IS EVIDENT IS NVN NOW HAS MORE LOGISTICS, MORE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS, AIRCRAFT, ETC.

6. US ABANDONMENT.

ASKED IF HE FEELS THE US ABANDONED SVN PRESIDENT THIEU ANSWERED "NOT YET BUT IF YOU CONTINUE TO CUT AID AND LET US DIE SLOWLY THEN EVERYONE WILL THINK THAT YOU WASH YOUR HANDS AND ABANDON YOUR ALLIES.

"

ASKED IF HE PERSONNALLY FELT DECEIVED PRESIDENT THIEU SAID "YES, BECAUSE I AM A VIETNAMESE TOO." RECALLED THAT ONCE PRESIDENT THIEU SAID SVN WAS LURED INTO WAR BY THE USA AND THE USA WERE THEMSELVES LURED BY THE COMMUNISTS PRESIDENT THIEU EXPLAINED: ONE, HE DID NOT MEAN LURE BUT DECEIVE; TWO, AT TIME OF SIGNATURE OF PARIS AGREEMENT PRESIDENT THIEU WAS TOLD THAT RUSSIA AND CHINA WILL COOPERATE IN NOT SUPPLYING NEW WAR EQUIPMENT TO NORTH VIETNAM YET THEY HAVE NOT KEPT TO THEIR PROMISES AND SO THEY DECEIVED THE USA. AS FOR SVN THE USA PLEDGED TO REACT SHOULD NVN ATTACK SVN AND TO CONTINUE TO HELP AS LONG AS SVN NEEDS US ASSISTANCE, YET THE USA TALKS INSTEAD OF CUTTING AID AND DOES NOTHING IN THE FACE OF NVN CONTINUING ESCALATION OF THE WAR, SO THE SVN FEEL THEY ARE BEING DECEIVED BY THE USA.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3396
AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
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AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
CINCPAC
USDELJEC PARIS

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 2561

DEPT PASS IMMEDIATE IBS/NCA

7. ELECTION

PRESIDENT THIEU REPEATED STATEMENTS OF MARCH FIFTH REFTEL ASKED WHETHER US AID WILL HAVE ANY BEARING ON HIS FINAL DECISION TO RUN OR NOT TO RUN PRESIDENT THIEU REPLIED US AID HAS DIRECT IMPACT ON WAR AND THEREFORE ANY CANDIDATE WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER THIS ASPECT. ASKED TO LOOK BACK TO HIS EIGHT YEARS AT THE PRESIDENCY AND SAY WHAT HE WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE PRESIDENT THIEU SAID HE WOULD MAINTAIN HIS TWO PRIORITIES FIRST TO STOP AGGRESSION AND NOT LET NVN TAKE OVER SVN AND SECOND TO CONCENTRATE ON SVN FOOD PRODUCTION AS TO MAKE SVN A SELF-SUFFICIENT COUNTRY. HE SAID HIS SLOGAN STILL REMAINS " TOMORROW BETTER THAN TODAY AND THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW BETTER THAN TOMORROW."

.8. POLITICAL PRISONERS. CORRUPTION.
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(SEE REFTEL)

9. REOPENING OF NEGOTIATION.
IS THERE ANY GAIN FOR SVN IF KISSINGER NEGOTIATES AGAIN WITH NVN? PRESIDENT THIEU SAID HE WOULD WELCOME ANY EFFORT TO STOP THE WAR BUT THAT IN THE PRESENT CONJUNCTURE HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT NVN WANTS PEACE. WILL SVN ACCEPT A COALITION GOVERNMENT? NEVER, SAID THE PRESIDENT.

10. US TROOPS.

WILL THE PRESIDENT EVER CONSIDER REQUESTING RETURN OF US TROOPS? THE PRESIDENT SAID "NO, I ONLY WANT AID NOT TROOPS."

11. ICCS ROLE.
PRESIDENT THIEU SAID ICCS CAN DO NOTHING BECAUSE OF THE STUBBOMESS OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS AND ICCS HAS NO DEFINITE AUTHORITY TO FORCE COMMUNISTS TO OBSERVE PARIS AGREEMENT.

END TEXT
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